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Confederation of Tomorrow



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THE PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

On May 18, 1967, the Ontario Legislature, by a vote of 70 to 1, endorsed the following resolution:

That this House approves the proposal, expressed in the Speech from the Throne, that the Government convene a "Confederation of Tomorrow Conference"

It is my thought that during this Centennial year you would be interested in the historic debate which preceded the adoption of the resolution and which reflects the views of the leaders of all parties in the Ontario Legislature.

John P. Robarts

Remarks by

THE HONOURABLE JOHN P. ROBERTS

Prime Minister

Mr. Speaker:

I am very pleased to initiate the debate and discussion on the resolution to hold a Confederation of Tomorrow Conference.

I would like to open with a few remarks which fall into perhaps four sections. The first portion will deal with the origins of the idea; second, the justification for holding such a conference; third, the subject matter that might be discussed at such a conference; and fourth, its form and structure.

The year 1967 is, of course, a very important year in the history of our country; a very important year to all our citizens and very important to all Canadians. It marks the 100th anniversary of our federal union and it seemed to me that Centennial confederation is a particularly appropriate time when we might sit down together as Canadians from coast to coast, to re-think and reconsider the character of our federal system.

Canadian federalism, like any federal system in the world, has undergone a continuing process of change in a very rapidly changing world. On the whole, I think we can say that we have been successful in Canada in meeting new conditions, in solving problems as they have presented themselves and in making changes where they have been necessary.

However, in my opinion there has been increasing evidence, in the last ten years, that if Canada is to continue to survive as a country which satisfies all the aspirations of the majority of its citizens, then an overall re-appraisal of the federal structure is essential.

I believe that Centennial year, this year, provides us with the necessary atmosphere of understanding and of goodwill. Our people are in a proper frame of mind to carry out such an examination. I think we can take this opportunity, and take the mood of our people, to review our successes, to discuss our failures and to plan for our future.

I have been criticized for calling this conference. I have been accused of doing it for purely political purposes. I think that these criticisms are unjustified. A history of the development of the idea would indicate that it has been developed over a period of years.

I first mentioned it in October of 1966 at a Federal-Provincial Conference held in Ottawa. I raised it at that Conference and certainly I received no objections to the idea at that time. I discussed

it in Montreal when I was addressing a gathering there some months later.

It flows, naturally I think, from the formation and constitution of our own committee, which has been investigating all phases of constitutional change and Confederation. That committee has been at work for over two years and its results have been distributed to members of this House.

I put this background before you, Mr. Speaker, simply to indicate that this was no flash in the pan; this is a carefully thought out idea which can, if handled properly and dealt with in the proper fashion, make, in my opinion, a very large contribution to the future of our country.

I would like to go back and give some examples of what has happened in the past. The past 20 years have seen a tremendous growth in governmental functions, responsibilities, and a rapidly increasing demand for government services at all levels.

Some of these services have fallen under the legislative jurisdiction of the Federal government some have come under the jurisdiction of the Provincial governments and some have fallen in between. Some do not really fall clearly in one jurisdiction or the other and the most important means by which we have attempted to solve these problems of Canadian federalism, has been the institution of the Federal-Provincial conference, particularly in the last few years.

Since I have been leader of this Government, Federal-Provincial conferences have been characterized basically by a need to resolve important and pressing problems of a specific nature. We have met over the years — and I will not go over the number of conferences there have been — but they have been directed to, for the most part, very specific problems.

We can think of such things, particularly in the fiscal field, as opting out, Canada pension plan, Federal Government loans to municipalities, student loans, youth allowances, equalization payments across the country, tax-sharing arrangements and cost-sharing programs in general. All these matters have been dealt with at Federal-Provincial conferences.

We have had several conferences on the Fulton-Favreau formula, in which we attempted to find a means of changing our constitution here in Canada. Those meetings ended in failure, for which many of us are really very sad, but then, in addition to these, there have been, over the past few years a myriad of meetings at the civil serv-

ice level which were called pretty much on an ad hoc basis to deal with a wide, broad variety of problems. Decisions at these conferences, while taken to solve very specific problems, have had very profound effects on the nature of Canadian federalism, and I would suggest to you that our Canadian federalism has been changed by this method.

May I just deal with one phase of this, in order to illustrate what I mean: Let us look at shared-cost programs and what has happened in that area in the past few years.

Following the second world war, the Federal Government with the very often enthusiastic compliance of the English speaking provinces, initiated a series of cost-sharing programs in provincial fields of jurisdiction, such as vocational education, welfare assistance and highway construction.

The justification for the introduction of these programs was the development of national standards of services, and the provision of assistance to the provinces to cope financially in new and expensive program areas.

Objections, principally from Quebec, that these programs constituted an invasion of Provincial responsibilities and, therefore, a direct flouting of The British North America Act were ignored — a fact that has helped to engender a deep-rooted suspicion of Federal Government initiatives in some quarters.

The shared-cost programs, and we have participated in them, of course, in this Province, have achieved many worthwhile purposes, sir, but they did ignore some of the recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Commission. They ignored some of the basic principles of public finance, in fact.

If you look in volume two of the papers we published, Professor Alexander Brady quotes the Federal Deputy Minister of Finance as saying that when the Provinces allow the Federal Government to provide leadership and initiatives this “really means that those who are constitutionally responsible are not in fact making the basic decisions, they are allowing themselves to be led”. That is a quote, as I say from Professor Brady’s paper.

What this means in effect, is that the introduction of these shared programs changed the de facto division of constitutional responsibility. By the introduction of shared-cost programs — the constitutional responsibility shifted from the Provinces to the Federal Government. So we have that shift, if you look at the cost-shared programs.

In 1963, the Federal Government seriously altered its policy regarding shared-cost programs to meet the complaints raised by the Province of Quebec, and this is where we got into the whole business of opting out. The Federal Government recognized, in its Interim Arrangements Act of 1964, that Provinces should have the means to take over full responsibility for programs lying within Provincial jurisdiction. So here once again we have another shift, and another change, in Canadian federalism and another shift in the basis of responsibility.

That Act permitted any province which so desired to "opt out" of any of 29 specified shared-cost programs. What, in fact, happened was that Quebec was the only province to take advantage of this legislation; and thus we had, once again, another shift and another change in Canadian federalism, a shift in the actual functioning of our country.

A situation was created here whereby Quebec's financial powers and responsibilities appeared to be considerably greater than those of the other provinces, when they opted out of these programs and took fiscal equivalents. It appeared to some that a dangerous precedent had been set which could have led to further Quebec demands to take over responsibility of programs within the Federal sphere of responsibility, and that the journey down the slippery road to an "associate state" relationship in Canada had begun.

Partly as a result of these fears, a new philosophy has been adopted in Ottawa in recent days regarding the development of Federal-Provincial relations. The new approach appears to be that a distinct line should be drawn between Federal responsibilities and Provincial responsibilities, and that the Federal Government should scrupulously avoid intruding into Provincial affairs.

This situation would apply to all provinces so that most shared-cost programs would be terminated and along with them, the special status which the opting-out legislation really gave to the Province of Quebec, or effectively put Quebec in, a particular status of its own.

I use this as only one example of how Federal initiative and Federal-Provincial conferences have resulted in decisions which were predicated first on a highly centralist view of Canadian federalism — that is the immediate post-war era; second, on a view which would permit different relationships to exist between individual provinces and the Federal Government and this, of course, arose out of the option to opt out if one wished; and third, on a

view which would see all provinces similar in their relationships to Ottawa but with a greater measure of general decentralization than was the case in those early postwar years.

These are some of the shifts that have taken place over a period of time. I would suggest to you that these very fundamental questions of where our country was going, were not in fact discussed. These were offshoots of the various courses of action that came about in developing particular shared-cost programs and in meeting the events of specific days and specific times as they occurred.

At no time were the real, fundamental questions debated *per se*. The questions of change came about almost as a byproduct. These questions have always been below the surface and have never been consciously rationalized. Until we do come to grips with some of these questions, I am convinced that we will continue to drift, in this country, on what might be termed an uncharted course with these things taking effect as a result of certain specific problems.

This is an example I give to you of why I think we need the form and type of discussion that can be handled in the type of conference I am proposing.

It is precisely for this reason that I wanted to hold a new type of conference — a conference which would concern itself primarily with the wider aims of Canadian Confederation. It is precisely for this reason that the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference should not have to consider specific proposals for constitutional change. If such changes do prove to be necessary they can be discussed at subsequent conferences — conferences which I hope will result from our opening discussions and which can deal with the more specific problems that these discussions will bring about.

Last October an arrangement was concluded to govern Federal-Provincial fiscal arrangements for the next two years.

Because that arrangement was reached — whether we agree or disagree now does not matter, the fact that does matter is, that our fiscal arrangements, Federally and Provincially, are settled for a two-year period; thus we can exclude a discussion of financial matters from this conference.

By excluding fiscal matters, matters of money, I hope we can avoid the atmosphere of bickering that we all know is too likely to accompany financial discussions: It seems that when we are discussing financial matters we drift into an atmosphere of bickering and we do not look at the broader issues. I suppose this is purely human nature.

It happens in the best of families but here we have an opportunity to exclude the financial discussion and to limit our discussion to these broader aims of our Confederation.

I would suggest that we use this two-year breathing space to good advantage. It was when we had concluded that two-year arrangement I first made the suggestion that a conference of this type could and should be held, because we would be able to put the financial matters to one side for perhaps the first time in a good many years.

We will undoubtedly be back to discuss fiscal arrangements, because this agreement lasts for only two years, but for the two-year period it is settled and we know where we are going and we know what we are going to do. I think we can easily disregard the money aspect of this for the present.

There are many other reasons to welcome a conference at this particular time. Many of the problems have not yet come to a head and we are still able to discuss them in a calm and objective manner that will not be possible if we wait until a crisis is upon us. A conference at this time does not have to operate under the pressure of being forced to reach a set of decisions. A conference of this type can be simply a forum for discussion and an exchange of views between all the people of Canada.

I would say a conference of this type can be of double value. First it allows the Federal and the Provincial Governments to come together to initiate discussion among themselves concerning the fundamental issues that each government must face: because we must face these issues, we cannot avoid them. Such an exercise will be of value to all of the governments involved in that it will allow them to gain a wider understanding of each other's difficulties.

Second, a conference of this type will be of great value to the general public in that it will acquaint them with these difficulties, provide them with important background information, and allow our own people to begin forming some of their own opinions about what is going on in our country, what should go on in our country and what they, as individuals, want done in our country.

I am happy to see that already, by merely placing this resolution on the order paper, we have generated a good deal of discussion not only in this province but in other provinces. We have already achieved, in my opinion, some very worthwhile results. People have had time to examine the proposition.

It never occurred to me that it would receive universal acclaim.

I was quite certain there would be those who would object, but nonetheless we are doing something, we have started the discussion which in my opinion is so very necessary.

It has given us, too, a means of putting into the hands of our people the background studies that have been done in this Province. We have tabled here three volumes of background studies done by some of the ablest academic brains we have in Ontario without regard to any political persuasion. These men have given of their time and talents on behalf of their country and their fellow Canadians. We are able now to place this information in the hands of our people so that they may understand what is involved, so that they may see what decisions are going to be made which will affect their lives and the lives of their children in the years that lie ahead.

Now Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that Ontario overstepped its jurisdiction in proposing to host a Confederation of Tomorrow Conference. I sincerely believe that this is not the case. I think any view such as that is based on a misinterpretation of what we are proposing to do.

I would like to repeat that this conference is not to be one where firm decisions concerning changes in our Federal system will be taken, but it will be rather a forum for discussion, the beginning of a dialogue in which all the Governments of Canada will be invited to participate. There is no precedent for this type of conference; and I would suggest to you, there being no precedent, there is not traditional restriction as to who may act as host for a meeting such as this.

Mr. Speaker, you might ask why we in the Province of Ontario would offer our services as host to the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference. I would remind the hon. members that Ontario occupies a very important historical place in our Confederation. We sent representatives to Charlottetown in 1864, and to Quebec City to negotiate terms on which the present federation was formed. Historically we have always played our part in development of our country and it seemed only fitting — and I think it is only fitting — that Ontario should again take an active role when it is obvious some action is needed.

What is wrong with Ontario stepping forth and saying, "Let us do this"?

I am very proud to be in Ontario, and take this initiative, and have the opportunity to do it. This is our traditional role in Canada

and we intend to play our part.

There is another very important justification, in my opinion, for a province to do this, particularly Ontario. A well-known theme in Canadian Federal history has been the efforts of the Province of Quebec to retain for itself as wide a jurisdiction as is possible. The past seven years have seen rapid changes which at times have exacerbated relations between the federal government and Quebec. We know. We have been present. We have seen these exchanges and these confrontations.

During the last few years, there has been a call from many Quebec spokesmen, both public and private, representing a wide variety and divergence of opinion for changes, or at least a review, of the federal system. The advantage, in my opinion, of a province calling a conference of this type is that it will diminish the friction that sometimes developed at Federal-Provincial conferences. I think this is a very important aspect to this whole matter. We should be able, as a province, to develop an atmosphere, in a conference of this type, which would be conducive to quiet contemplation of these matters, and a friendly atmosphere in which we will not have some of the confrontations of the past.

There are many reasons that bind Quebec and Ontario together — our geography, our geographic closeness for one thing — we are side by side with one another. Our size and similarity of problems. Because our problems are very similar, means that we have much in common with the Province of Quebec, and I do not think I presume too much when I say that Ontario has a special role to play as an outstanding and an understanding interpreter of the views of Quebec to some of the other parts of Canada.

I am aware of the criticism that is being raised and I would like to allay some of the suspicions I have heard recently expressed — that Ontario and Quebec are joining together in some sort of power play to bring about changes in the terms of our Confederation, that these two provinces may desire.

I would like to assure you that this is not the case. There is no Ontario-Quebec axis. The suspicions are false. They have no basis in fact. I want to make that very clear indeed.

We suggested this conference because it will allow Canadians from every part of the country to come together and discuss their problems in the widest possible context. I think it is true that Canadians are not particularly well acquainted with the problems of the regions of the country other than those in which they live.

It is difficult for our people to travel across this enormous country; this will be one of the great virtues of Expo as I see it, in that it will draw people from all parts of Canada into Quebec province and I am quite certain that there will be many Canadians who will visit Quebec for the first time in their lives.

This is a natural result of our geography. We are a huge country and we need to bring our people together to understand one another and to understand the regional problems as they exist.

At this Confederation of Tomorrow Conference, Canadians from the Eastern provinces, the Western provinces, Ontario and Quebec, as well as those representing the Federal Government, will all have an opportunity to state their views.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to a more precise description of the subjects with which I would like to see the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference deal. An agenda which gives an opportunity to each of our Governments to explore broad areas of concern to it in a constructive manner is essential, both to the success of the conference, and to ensure that governments in Canada will want to participate in it. I would hope that all Governments would want to take some part.

For this reason, I would like to suggest the main topics that might be dealt with at this conference, but I would also like to leave it open to other governments to suggest topics they would like to see added, of which I may not have thought.

Preparation of an agenda for a conference such as this depends, in part, on whether it is to be the first of a series. My own desire is that this conference must be only the first, in which the stage will be set for more specific discussions as time goes on.

Yet at this point I cannot predict the desires of my fellow Premiers, nor would I be so presumptuous as to lay out the agenda for a series of conferences that might extend over a period of years. These will be worked out as we go along. I hope we will all be able to agree on both the desirability and form of future meetings after we have met this year.

If this conference is to be the curtain raiser, then it must deal with broad topics, within which more specific proposals can be discussed at some later time. My initial suggestion, which I make to you today, is for four broad subject areas.

First, I should like to see us review the ways in which we believe our present federal system is not working properly. In other words, what are the things in our present federal system that we find to

be not suitable to us? In this way, we should be able to pinpoint some areas where constructive proposals for change can later be made.

Second, in a somewhat more positive vein, I should like to see us devote some time to the broad objectives we think our federation should be striving to achieve. In other words, what are we after; what is the goal, the direction in which we think our country should be heading? This matter, in my view, should be given very close attention.

Third, and somewhat more specifically, I should like to see some time devoted to an examination of the machinery and structure of Federal-Provincial and interprovincial relations in Canada. As we all are aware, the Federal-Provincial conference has grown something like Topsy.

I do not think it has ever been specifically planned as a form of consultation between governments. It has developed on a completely ad hoc basis and, I think, this whole area is one that could well receive some very close scrutiny and very close study.

And fourth, I think we should discuss the role we see for the English and French languages in this country, and the way in which governments can help to provide a solution to the crucial question of English-French relations in Canada.

In a certain sense, these last two questions are but part of the first two, and, therefore, should perhaps logically arise in the broader discussion. But I suggest they are specific topics in their own right, because I think they may help us distinguish between issues which all too often have become hopelessly entangled.

To my mind, there is a distinct set of problems in Canada which are a direct result of Canada being a federal country. These problems of Federal-Provincial and interprovincial relations are common to most federal states and the development of an efficient machinery for solving them must be a priority matter.

If we were to solve some of the most urgent of these problems of intergovernmental relations, I am convinced that many questions, which, we think, fall under the other category of English-French problems, should perhaps turn out not to be problems at all. On the other hand, we have a fundamental problem, in Canada, of French Canadian nationalism which must be tackled urgently by a searching examination of the place of the two basic cultural groups of the country. This is a problem with which we must deal.

The first topic, "How is the present federal system not working,"

might give an opportunity for each of the governments represented at the conference, to outline briefly the role which it feels the current division of powers, structure and machinery of government in Canada create problems for it — these problems will be different from one province to another — and how the current system may fail to promote the most effective operation of the country and the feeling that we all do belong in the same country. These are the things we are after.

This kind of agenda item runs the risk of opening the conference to a restatement of financial and other problems which the Provincial Governments have had to repeat all too often in the recent series of Federal-Provincial conferences. However, as I said earlier, by specifically excluding fiscal and financial problems from consideration, I hope we can avoid any possibility of the conference turning into a cataloguing of provincial grievances against the Federal Government, because that, of course, we do not want.

I am very anxious that the Federal Government be represented at this conference but I do not think it would be reasonable to expect its delegation to come and be faced with a complete barrage of provincial criticism. I think we must be very careful to ensure that this does not happen.

What I do hope discussion on this agenda item will accomplish, is a better understanding of the feeling towards Canada of the different regions of the country itself. We have heard a great deal about the feeling of dissatisfaction in Quebec with the current situation and a major objective of change in Canada must be to encourage Quebecers to feel they are at home as Canadians in Canada. They must be made to feel that they are completely at home in the framework of our country.

If we are to achieve some of these ends that I am looking towards, we must have a very deep understanding of the feelings of Canadians in all parts of Canada. We must give all parts of Canada an opportunity to address any grievances they may think they have.

When I mentioned the evolution of shared-cost programs, and showed how the changes had occurred in the development of these programs, I touched on another problem which I hope could be brought up again in discussion of the first agenda item. I am referring to the very broad range of functions which individual provinces are capable, or desirous, of undertaking.

Obviously, some provinces are more capable and more desirous of taking action in certain fields than are others. Recent discus-

sions of securities legislation — the regulation of financial institutions — for example, would indicate that this area is a matter of pressing concern to two or three of the larger provinces — all of which have the administrative capability of expanding their present activities in this area.

A number of smaller provinces on the other hand, have very little reason to establish an elaborate system of inspection and control over financial institutions, and, in any case, would probably prefer that this be a matter for the Federal Government.

Much of the same prevails for a subject like the regulation of private pension plans, a subject on which Ontario has convened several Federal-Provincial and interprovincial meetings. Is it reasonable in this type of sophisticated field, the pension field, to expect for instance, that a small province like Prince Edward Island should establish a commission, and hire actuaries, to regulate the very small number of pension plans being administered in that province?

It would be instructive to discuss the extent to which different provinces feel that the federal power to maintain an integrated economy is eroded by independent provincial action in some of the newer and more sophisticated fields of government endeavour.

Do other provinces feel that all provinces should administer the same range of functions, or do they feel that this may put them in too much of a straitjacket? Is there room for delegation of powers to the Federal Government by individual provinces, as was suggested in the draft of the Fulton-Favreau formula? To what extent do some of the smaller provinces feel that they can band together to administer, jointly, subjects which may be too large and complex for each to administer separately?

These kind of questions, which may come up during a discussion of problems of the current federal system, lead automatically into the second item on the agenda — the aims and objectives we would like to see for our federation. I would hope that the delegates who may, under the first topic, want to emphasize some of the factors which tend to diminish a feeling of loyalty and attachment to the country as a whole would, under the second topic, suggest ways in which such loyalty and attachment could be strengthened.

I would hope also that the delegates to the conference could, under this topic, describe in broad terms the place which they see for the two official languages in this country.

Some discussions might also be generated in the area of bicultural-

turalism or multiculturalism. It would be interesting to hear views on the role of governments in Canada on the perennial question of our relationships with the United States.

How can governments help in maintaining economic progress and competitiveness in income levels vis-a-vis our neighbours to the south, while at the same time, maintaining and strengthening our political independence? Should we be aiming for a gradual adaptation of our federal structure and institutions to changing conditions and demands, or should we set as a goal, a fresh start for Canada, with a new constitution and a new affirmation of our objectives?

If the first topic has the danger of provoking a negative discussion, the second may have the danger of producing a discussion which is too generalized to be constructive. For this reason, I added the third and fourth topics which might help to bring the discussion down to earth.

The third topic — the machinery of Federal-Provincial and inter-provincial relations — is a subject already on the agenda of the tax structure committee. The institute of intergovernmental relations at Queen's University was commissioned by the tax structure committee to produce a report by the end of this summer on the machinery for promoting intergovernmental coordination of fiscal and financial policy.

By the time the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference is convened, this report may be available and may form part of the basis for a discussion. The topic I have suggested, however, is wider and would cover methods of coordinating all spheres of government activity. Here we might discuss the shortcomings and successes of Federal-Provincial Conferences; the pros and cons of a permanent Federal-Provincial Secretariat; the possibility of more binding interprovincial arrangements; and ways in which "prior consultation" could truly become more than "prior notification".

The fourth topic, French-English relations in Canada, is a topic like the others which could be the subject of a series of conferences in itself. Nevertheless, I think it is useful to have it on the agenda both because it is so crucial to the future of Canadian federalism, and because it is time that a stocktaking was made of developments in this area within the last year or two.

For example, so far this year, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have all announced changes in practice relating to the use of French or French language education. It would be in-

structive to review present policies and intentions in the light of overall goals, particularly if the first volume of the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is available at that time.

In our country, approximately one-third of our people speak French, centred primarily in the Province of Quebec. It has been asserted that only in Quebec can the French Canadian be himself. I would suggest that this is an aspect of the whole Canadian dilemma which requires our immediate, and very steadfast, concern.

I have stated before and I should like to state again that I am committed to the proposition that cultural equality is the basis upon which Canada is formed. This country is a bi-national state, founded in 1867 by the Fathers of Confederation, who clearly recognized that this was not to be a purely English-speaking country.

There are some who argue that Canada, being in North America where the dominant language is English, should aim to inhibit the use of French, and become more and more English in all ways. There are others who seek to create a French-speaking ghetto beyond which no French could be used. Neither of these suggestions seems to me worthy of becoming in any sense the policy of this country.

What we must seek to ensure is that, wherever possible, French can be used in all Federal Governmental Departments and agencies. In all provinces where there are appreciable groups of French-speaking Canadians, provision must be made to permit their children to be educated in their own language. This Government is addressing itself to this problem — the whole question of bilingual education in Ontario — and we want Franco-Ontarians to feel that they can be themselves here, and that this is their province as well as anyone else's.

And we must, I think all English Canadians must — ask ourselves if over the years, we have been quite as fair and as just to our French-speaking minorities outside of Quebec, as the French Canadians have been to the English-speaking minority in Quebec Province. I do not wish to paint any sombre picture of the past, but I would like to point out that we can do many things to remedy this situation today.

This aspect inevitably leads us to the question of means. How can we in Canada ensure that English and French-speaking Canadians will have similar opportunities to grow and to express themselves? Surely we have 100 years of common endeavour behind us and there are many alternatives, and many options open to

us if we will examine them and take action.

We have heard of the associate states, we have heard of special status and cooperative federalism. And no doubt there will be other ideas advanced, and other propositions will be put forward. We must ask ourselves, "Are formal constitutional changes really necessary or would adjustments and amendments serve us just as well?"

We do not, at any time, close the door on change itself. If we find through the discussions and deliberations I am suggesting, that changes are necessary, then we will, of course, sit down and work the changes out. However, I think we must be very clear as to what we are doing, why we are doing it, and where it will lead us. This is why we must give these matters a great deal of thought and discussion.

Finally, I should like to make a few remarks about the form which this conference will take. I do not want to be in any way dogmatic about the composition of delegations, the method of participation, the place or the exact time. I think we will have to be specific on some matters of administration, but as I say, we will not be in any way dogmatic.

I would hope to send invitations to the conference, after the conclusion of this debate, to the Government of Canada and the governments of the provinces. I have chosen this method of inviting other governments because I do not want the conference to be thought of solely as a meeting place of heads of government. It has been indicated to me that the Prime Minister of Canada might feel that he would not wish to attend. I would issue an invitation to his Government, and to the governments of the other provinces, and each government can decide for itself how it would care to deal with it.

If, for one reason or another, any head of government does not find it possible to accept the invitation, I should be most happy if a delegation from his government could be sent. This form of invitation, I would suggest, would permit each government to make its own delegation. I would envisage that delegations could include not only politicians, but also senior civil servants and outside experts, if these are considered necessary by the particular government involved.

I would suggest that, from its own delegation, each government would choose spokesmen who would be the actual participants in discussion. This is not meant to restrict any delegation from ef-

fectively using members other than its spokesmen. Each government would be quite free to decide who, in the delegation, would make contributions on individual subjects.

For example, it might be that some governments would wish to have outside experts present their views in more technical areas. However, we must find some means of keeping the discussion under control and I would suggest that this control could be achieved by limiting the number of participants in the actual discussion.

I would think that such subsequent conferences could be devoted to more specific issues, and could take on, perhaps, more of a seminar form. I do not know that I would go all the way with a "teach-in", as was suggested. However, I do agree with them that through the medium of these discussions between governments on the future of our country, we should be attempting to create an understanding and active interest in the problems of Confederation in the public at large. This is the basic purpose of this operation.

In concluding, I would like to stress again, that this conference should be one where positions are explored, but not stated. I would like to avoid a situation in which individual governments are forced to take firm positions. That is not what we are after. What the country needs now, is a much fuller discussion of the basic principles on which the second century of Confederation should be based. I would ask you all to support this resolution so that we may move ahead in this next very important step in the history of our country.

Remarks by

R. F. NIXON

Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Speaker:

I hope you will accept my sincere assurance, when I speak as leader of the Liberal Party, that our interests in the development of our nation are as manifest, and I hope as obvious, as the interest of any citizen in the province of Ontario and for any member of the House to question these by interjection, or by formal means, is surely doing us an injustice.

It is not my responsibility to speak for the rest of the members of the House; I know a good many of them will be taking part in the discussion this afternoon, but there surely is no question in anyone's mind that everyone here, speaking for their constituents, is deeply concerned with the development of our Confederation, the lessons that history provides, and the fact that as we approach our second century, it is with confidence and a high heart that this century approaching will be the fulfilment of some of the grandest dreams that we, as Canadians or human beings, have ever had, and that any conference where men of good-will sit down in Centennial year, or at any other time, is bound to be of value. For that reason, we support its principle.

It appears to me also, that the hon. Prime Minister, in bringing to our attention recent historic developments of shifts in policy governing federal-provincial relationships, has done us a great service. He has often taken other opportunities to draw to our mind that our history extends beyond a century, and that this is the 175th anniversary of the coming of government — though it was not, in the first case, responsible government — to this part of what we could call, broadly, British North America.

It is not my intention to recount the lessons of the historical past as I see it, but one part of this surely has bearing on one of the problems that faces us as we go forward to a series of conferences as outlined by the Prime Minister this afternoon. That is the period following Lord Durham's report when in 1841 the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were put together to form the United Province of Canada. In order to accommodate the regional differences, it was found necessary and politic to move the capital of the colony — and I suppose that is the name of it — from time to time. For a period of years it would be in Toronto, it was then moved to Quebec City, back to Kingston and then to Montreal —

where I understand in 1848 or 1849 they burned the Parliament buildings down. But that is another story.

I think it is wise for us to bear in mind the accommodation and the elimination of prejudice that must have taken place when the members in those days came from their various constituencies — all of which would surely be best described as backwoods constituencies by our understanding of the terms now — coming to Parliament of the day with all of the prejudices associated with inadequate education, inadequate communication, and perhaps the prejudices associated with religious fervour that approached a narrowness that we do not often recognize today.

When we think of the Protestant Orangemen meeting with the French Roman Catholics and working out their positions of difference with some breadth and depth of humanity, even though they say the debates were really something to behold, as recently reported in one of the Toronto papers, this is an example of a lesson for all of us, whether we are Parliamentarians or simply citizens of our nation.

Even in these troubled times some of the problems that were well known by the members of the Parliament of the United Provinces are still unresolved. But they were able to cope with them in those days and move forward putting political differences aside, and melding together the colonies of British North America by Confederation and form a new nation.

The new nation has been successful, more or less, for a century. We are now on the threshold of new developments and it is for this reason that we support the principle that has been put before us today in the resolution.

Now I would say further that a heavy responsibility will rest on the participants in such a conference. Individually they must take into account and give representation to the interests and views of their particular electorates. Collectively they must work towards a position which will meet the interests and desires of Canada as a whole. Their ultimate responsibility therefore will be to speak not for their regions but for Canada. Their final objectives and dominating principle must be the good of a united and strong country.

At any one point in time people tend to believe their problems are new and crucial and unique, but that of course is not so. The problems of today have their roots in the past. Our current governmental problems are not unique, they are rather the present manifestation of a tension that has dominated our public life in

Ontario for 175 years.

Debate over the proper allocation of responsibility between the regional and central governments has been a recurring thing in the history of our nation. It was a major concern indeed to the Fathers of Confederation in their debates during the mid-1860's. There were pressing and practical reasons for uniting the British colonies of North America — the desire to expand the economic base of the colonies, the challenge of developing the west, the fear of American military power which was very real then, the political pressures coming from the British government itself.

There was therefore an essential unity of purpose, but there was also a concern to protect local and regional interests. In dividing legislative authority between the federal and provincial levels, the framers of The British North America Act placed in the hands of the central government the responsibilities for defence, communications and integrated economic development. According to Professor D. V. Smiley, and I quote from him:

"Apart from the physical defence of the colonies, the overriding aim of the Fathers of Confederation, and more particularly those from the United Canadas, was to lay the groundwork for an integrated economic unit in the northern half of the continent and the Dominion was given the legislative powers and revenue sources deemed necessary to ensure the success of this venture."

All local concerns, matters that touched on social, family educational and municipal affairs, were left to the discretion of the Provincial Legislature. To quote Professor Smiley once again:

"The broad solution was to entrust the dominion with the authority believed necessary to effective military defence and economic development and in respect to which no cultural cleavages were anticipated, while the provinces would have the jurisdiction over those classes of subjects where legislation would have a direct cultural incidence."

The people of Upper Canada, Mr. Speaker, as much as they wanted the right to decide on their own educational and property matters, also demanded that transportation improvements, customs and trade be the concern of a federal authority. The people of Quebec had no reservations in giving these jurisdictions to the Federal Government, because it was considered that on matters of general economic improvement, racial and cultural differences would not matter.

The original intention then in 1867 was to create a strong central government. The provincial powers were directed towards local, and what were considered to be minor, areas of jurisdiction: and the general problems of the country as a whole were made the responsibility of the federal government.

In one recent publication, Mr. Speaker, which you may have read, it was reported that John A. Macdonald himself considered the Provincial Parliaments would in fact have sort of county jurisdictions and were relegated simply to accommodate the regional differences of the time, and that in fact the view was held that the Federal Government would go on to ever greater effective power and that the government of the provinces would become weaker as the development of the country went on.

The course of history has conflicted with the intentions of the founding fathers. Throughout the past century, through the judicial decisions of the Privy Council and the Supreme Court and through the assumption of new responsibilities by government, there have been fluctuations in the balance of the division of legislative powers in the Canadian system of government.

The Province of Ontario has historically been a staunch defender of provincial rights enumerated under section 92 of our constitution. In their time, Oliver Mowat, Premier Whitney, Howard Ferguson and Mitchell Hepburn all fought strenuously against federal interference in provincial affairs. Indeed, it is their vigorous defence of provincial powers before the judicial committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain which has led to the present interpretation of The British North America Act.

But while at times judicial interpretation has strengthened the provincial powers and responsibilities, there have been counter factors which have moved the constitution towards stronger central government and which many of us support at this time.

The whole division of powers under The British North America Act has been transformed by the growth of Canada into an industrialized, urbanized, technological society. The problems of social welfare, of education, of transportation, of economic development, of social change and automation, of housing, in many ways unforeseen by the framers of the constitution, have given, to the provinces, a range of extremely important responsibilities.

As we move into an era which is more and more concerned with the politics of planning, economic growth and development, these responsibilities are going to increase even further. Naturally

enough, in meeting this succession of new demands imposed on our governments, the divisions of authority which are an essential characteristic of a federal system of government, have become blurred.

It became clear, for example, that those sources of revenue allocated to the provinces — direct taxation, public lands revenue and licence sales — were not adequate to cover the expanding role of the provincial government in social services. Highways, railways, health, welfare, education and resources development, relatively unimportant matters a century ago, have, in the 20th century, become matters of overriding importance. The Federal Government, with its unlimited revenue sources, began to advance to the provinces, conditional grants. Today, these transfer payments pervade many provincial functions as the Prime Minister recounted just a few moments ago.

The result has sometimes been an assumption of influence by governments outside their constitutional scope and, occasionally, an escape by other governments, of their constitutional obligations. A further unfortunate result of this gradual alteration of governmental powers has been confusion, in the minds of people of our nation, as to who is responsible for the conduct of certain kinds of public business. Indeed, sometimes, as we saw recently in the financial field, this uncertainty of constitutional responsibility extends to the governments themselves.

Another example that has been apparent during this session of the Legislature has been the overlapping of responsibility in agriculture. I have seen it recounted that the founding fathers did not know how to deal with this important industry, even more important in the days of Confederation, and that the compromise was they permitted both levels of government to bring about departments that would have under their jurisdiction — agriculture. We have seen that the department in this province, and the Department of Agriculture at the federal level, have recently had more and more difficulties in preparing a plan in which their jurisdictions would, on the one hand, not overlap, and on the other, would not leave gaps in which part of the agricultural economy would not have the assistance of government.

The present concern to re-think our constitutional structure, springs from the desire to adapt the new responsibilities of government to our traditional governmental division of powers. We have made such attempts in the past. Mackenzie King in 1937 estab-

lished the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial affairs — usually called the Rowell-Sirois Commission — to examine, and recommend changes to overcome, “certain fundamental strains and weaknesses arising out of our present allocation of financial powers and governmental responsibilities”. That last phrase is lifted from those earlier terms of reference.

This Royal Commission, composed of representatives of the highest distinction from the five geographical regions of Canada, held two years of sittings in every provincial capital. I understand that the hearings themselves took two years, and when they came to Toronto, the hearings were truncated by the inability of the Premier of the day to see fit to sit down with them for any lengthy discussion.

As a matter of fact, sir, my colleague from Grey South (Mr. Oliver), might be able to give us some of the details there, because they are quite interesting. It heard private and official briefs and commissioned a whole series of technical studies. Newspapers heralded it as “the second Confederation,” and so on.

The impressive final report of the Rowell-Sirois Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial relations, when it was tabled in 1940, advanced a program of reallocating jurisdictional responsibilities and revenue sources. I will not take the time of the House to recount these, although they make interesting reading. Number three in the main recommendations is as follows:

The provinces and municipalities were to retire from the fields of personal and corporation income taxes and succession duties.

No. 5 Equalization or national adjustment grants, to be determined annually by an independent finance commission, would be paid to the provinces in order that adequate social, educational and developmental services could be maintained without resort to taxation higher than the Canadian average. This makes quite interesting reading. In fact, they thought the provinces should surrender most of their sources of taxation, other than those from the development of natural resources — and even these were to be shared with the Federal Government — and to receive, each year, an unconditional grant — a block grant if you like — which was determined by an independent commission.

In other words, the Premiers were not going to be asked to sit down with the Federal Government to hammer out an agreement in the manner that has grown up since this report was tabled, and then shelved.

The implementations of these recommendations was left to a dominion-provincial conference which met in January of 1941, and you can imagine that citizens at all levels, whether in government or otherwise, were preoccupied with other extremely important matters.

Generally speaking, the Commission advocated that the Federal Government take over some of the expensive social services, in return for receiving exclusive rights in the income, corporation and succession duty fields. The provinces would, in place of the conditional grants and constitutional subsidies, receive transfer payments to carry on provincial services.

The alternatives that have been put forward in the papers presented by the Prime Minister's committee, and by the hon. Provincial Treasurer in his presentation of the Budget earlier this year, really boil down to three. The one being the reallocation of the tax available at all levels of government, so that a sharp line of distinction can be drawn beyond which neither jurisdiction would interfere. This approach is supported as you know, Mr. Speaker, by people in high places in the government in Ottawa.

The other approach is one that the Rowell-Sirois Commission has taken some years ago, and which was put forward by the Provincial Treasurer as one of the alternatives — that is, a return to block grants, unconditionally approved for the use of the provinces in their defined responsibility. In other words, the funds would be raised by the senior jurisdiction and they would return to the province, I suppose, following agreement, not reached by an independent financial commission — I do not believe this would be acceptable — but following "agreement" by the Prime Ministers, meeting with the leaders of the Federal Government.

The alternative, I suppose, is a continuation of what we are doing at the present time — that is, working out in a flexible, and perhaps an ad hoc basis, a continuation of a sharing of the responsibilities, financial and otherwise, as they grow and change with our growing and changing country.

Ontario took the position in its brief to the Rowell-Sirois Commission — and I believe this is of some value — and in the subsequent conference called to deal with the commission report, that if the Dominion would only return to the provinces those revenue sources which were constitutionally the property of the provinces, then there would be no difficulty in financing social and municipal services.

Instead of transferring responsibilities and revenue sources to the Federal Government, the Ontario brief argued that it would be best to transfer to the provinces the financial means of carrying out the social, educational and municipal services which had become their major responsibility.

The suggestion of this commission met critical opposition, not only from Ontario but from other provinces as well, but notably Quebec and British Columbia. In view of the failure to arrive at agreement, the proposals of this older commission, and the hopes raised by its appointment, were dashed.

This illustrates the difficulty of holding discussions in the constitutional area without assuring first, the cooperation of all governments. It is not possible to assure the fact that all governments will agree with what the majority approves, but the area of cooperation here is of prime importance. It is not, perhaps, apropos for me to recall too much of the days of the deliberations of the Rowell-Sirois commission, but it was set up federally, hoping that the provinces would cooperate.

This was a vain hope, as it turned out. When the commission came to at least three provincial capitals, they met with almost an insurmountable wall of opposition, not even sufficient cooperation to permit an exchange of information.

It is even said that in one provincial capital, the Premier of the day pelted the commissioners with hard buns that were baked at one of the well-known hostelrys. Perhaps we can carry on our negotiations, in this more enlightened age, with at least a soft bun.

So I would say that unless the basic consensus of the interested parties can be reached, such discussions may lead to a rigid defence of governmental positions, rather than an amicable and useful exchange of views.

In recent years, the governments of the Province of Quebec have taken a stand in federal matters not unlike that taken by Ontario in 1939 and 1940. In 1957, the Quebec Tremblay Royal Commission of inquiry on constitutional problems, reviewing the recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois report, criticized them for precisely those reasons Ontario had raised earlier. The Tremblay report felt that, and I quote:

“The fiscal and financial autonomy of the provincial Legislatures ought to have been established so that they might fulfil their obligations in complete independence.”

It went on to propose division of the tax fields, and I quote:

“which would put each of the provinces in a position to procure permanently, by its own authority, and on its own responsibility, the resources needed for the free exercise of its jurisdictions.”

The provinces would retain the full return of personal income, corporation profits, and succession duties levies, and, in turn, provide social services that are constitutionally provincial responsibilities.

If the provinces had sufficient resources at their disposal, the Tremblay report goes on to say:

“Nothing would matter or nothing would stand in the way of their assuming the full responsibility in these matters.”

The Federal Government would retain overall general responsibility for economic affairs, but of necessity would have to engage in close cooperation with the provinces to co-ordinate spending equalization and counter cyclical programs.

The Tremblay report had regarded itself as a return to the spirit of division of cultural and economic affairs embodied in The British North America Act, but in very recent years the official position of the Government of Quebec has changed materially. Instead of advocating a return to Confederation, that is a strict adherence to the provisions of the old constitution, the present constitution, the province has demanded a totally new confederation.

Premier Johnson committed his government at the September, 1966, Federal-Provincial tax structure committee, “to the fundamental task of obtaining legal and political recognition of the French Canadian nation”. Among other things this will require a new constitution to guarantee equal collective rights in our country to English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians, as well as give Quebec all the powers needed to safeguard its own identity.

These safeguards, as enumerated by Premier Johnson included, and I quote from his remarks:

“Free range to make its own decisions affecting the growth of its citizens as human beings, that is education, social security and health in all its aspects, their economic development, that is the forging of any economic and financial tool deemed necessary by the provincial government; their cultural fulfilment, which takes in not only the arts and literature but the French language as well; and the presence abroad of the Quebec community, that is relations with certain countries and international organizations.”

He concluded by asking for 100 per cent of the personal income, corporation profit and succession tax fields, to allow Quebec to meet her needs. Federal withdrawal from activity and fields of provincial priority and a new constitution to fully recognize, quoting his words, "the presence in Canada of a French-speaking nation with all the rights implied by that nationhood".

Now more recently, Premier Johnson has gone even further in demanding for Quebec the right to negotiate international treaties for matters falling within the provincial jurisdiction — particularly the cultural area — and in demanding the right to censor radio and television programs within the province.

To some these Quebec demands are a claim for special status. But special status is a vague term. Obviously, in cultural terms Quebec has a special status. Socially and culturally, Quebec for many reasons represents a unique and valuable heritage for us all.

That special position we support; long may the unique cultural identity of the province of Quebec flourish!

But I do not support the idea of an extended special constitutional status. Rather Quebec, like all the other provinces, must have sufficient independent freedom of action in the areas of regional concern to achieve the natural goals of French Canadians living within that province.

So I would say again, I believe Quebec, like all the other provinces, must have this sufficient independent freedom of action. Surely if constitutional changes are required they must be of a nature that will provide equality of freedom of action for all of the provinces uniting in Confederation.

The problem today is essentially that which confronted the Rowell-Sirois Commission. I seem to have difficulty in pronouncing that first word even though Mr. Rowell was a leader of the Liberal Party in the Province of Ontario — Rowell-Sirois, just to get that right.

Our task must be to ensure our governmental system adapts to the new challenges imposed on it, which were unforeseen by those who originally designed our Constitution.

How are we to overcome what Mackenzie King described as the "strains and weaknesses arising out of our present allocation of provincial powers and governmental responsibilities"?

The question which now confronts us is whether the relationship between the Federal and Provincial Governments which has

grown up over the past century is one which is adequately adapted to the needs of our present society.

The question is not simply a legal question, nor a question of what The British North America Act and the judicial decisions following it had established up to the present. Nor is the question one which can be referred to the past and settled for us by historians and lawyers.

The question is essentially a political one. What division of governmental responsibilities and powers between Federal and Provincial Governments is necessary and useful to meet the problems of our society? What division of legislative and administrative powers between the Federal and Provincial Government is appropriate?

And second, what division of financial resources is necessary to support the exercise of these powers?

I suggest the original principles of 1867 should still be applied in the reconsideration of the distribution of powers. That is areas which can only be dealt with adequately at the national level should be made the responsibility of the Federal Government, and the responsibilities of the provinces should extend to areas where there is an advantage in the regional treatment of problems.

A problem is not necessarily a national problem simply because it is one that is faced by the people of Canada in every part of the country. It should be a national problem in the sense that it falls within the scope of the federal government, if it is only capable of resolution by policies applied concertedly throughout Canada by central authorities.

You may feel that the motion that we are presently debating is hardly the vehicle for myself, as the leader of the Opposition, to give these particular views. But the Prime Minister of Ontario, in calling the conference, is, of course, consulting only with the heads of provinces and, hopefully, the head of the Government of Canada.

This may be the only opportunity, before such a conference is convened, when we, as private members, can put to you, sir, and to the people of Ontario, and to the leader of the Government of Ontario, what is the position of our party and our views at this time. So that although these views that I give to you now in some detail may not be precisely in order, when compared with the wording of the resolution, I hope you will permit me to continue.

Clearly, the responsibility for full employment and balanced

economic growth throughout Canada, falls within the scope of the Federal jurisdiction. The management of monetary and economic policy, foreign relations and defence, are also matters which can only be dealt with at the Federal level, whether or not they deal with matters of cultural involvement.

I asked the Prime Minister a few days ago if he would tell us what international agreement we had undertaken, as the Province of Ontario, because, as you know, sir, we have trade offices and certain other facilities in foreign lands.

I believe that, surely, with the consultation of the Government of Canada, these certainly fall within the prerogative of the Province of Ontario. But to suggest that we should embark on a series of cultural treaties and programs on an international level, is something that, I believe, can best, and most effectively, be controlled by the Government of Canada on behalf of us all, as Canadians.

I would say then, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government must ensure that all parts of Canada share in the general prosperity of the country, through equalization grants designed to place the poor provincial governments in a position to assume their full responsibilities. Of course, other areas are more difficult to define.

Currently, there is considerable debate as to whether education is an area which can only be adequately handled by participation of the Federal Government in the area. It is certain that education is a national problem in the sense that it is a problem throughout the country and sometimes, when we discuss the financing of education, it takes on the proportions, in the world as we know it, of a problem that is almost insurmountable, a problem that, it appears, will be with us as long as we are dealing with the affairs of the province, or the nation.

I go back to one of the recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Commission and that was, Mr. Speaker, that all of the costs of relief be taken over by the Government of Canada. In the 1930's, it was thought, by the members of the Legislature and the members of Parliament, that the provision of the most meagre standard of living was going to occupy all of the public funds that could be spared, and all of the ingenuity of the elected representatives.

It is for this reason, that the primary recommendation of that Commission deals with relief which, I believe, has been of concern to us ever since — and is a concern to us still — but does not impinge on our discussions as the major topic of importance.

So perhaps the responsibilities and difficulties with the financing

of education will, in time, pass and give way to some other emerging problem. I am not yet convinced that it is clear that education is a problem that can only be adequately handled by direct Federal participation in the education field.

However, given the urgency of the educational problem, there is clearly a need for the Federal Government to give the provinces greater constitutional access to financial resources to enable them to meet the education crisis.

I should like to say that we welcome the decision of the Federal Government to withdraw from shared-cost programs in fields which are clearly a Provincial responsibility. These programs have been beneficial in the past but it seems to me to be clear that the provinces now have the capacity to act fully in the areas of the responsibility. The withdrawal of Federal influence is, therefore, a logical step in making the intent of the federal system effective.

This recent decision by the Federal Government has led to considerable controversy. Many people would prefer to have the Federal Government participate in fields of provincial jurisdiction and leave to provincial governments, the option of withdrawing from such joint programs. The Prime Minister mentioned this when he recounted the special legislation, sometimes known as the opting out legislation, which has been, in some sense, disruptive of the unity of the nation.

The opting out principle would permit those provinces who wish Federal participation in meeting provincial programs, to accept such participation without committing other provinces who would prefer to go it alone. To be frank, I must say that I oppose this suggestion of Federal participation in provincial fields, coupled with the opting out arrangements.

It seems to me that we should respect the allocation of responsibility in our constitution. If we find that allocation unsatisfactory, we must revise the constitution — but a constitution as a fundamental law of our system should be respected scrupulously.

Moreover, I fear that the political pressures in some provinces are such that they would be led inevitably to opt out of all Federal joint programs and, in the end, we would arrive at a situation in which the effective focus of loyalty for the citizens of one province, would be to the provincial capital, while for other provinces, the same kind of important problems would be dealt with largely by the Federal Government.

In effect, we would arrive at a system of associated states with

different levels of government handling major areas of policy, and greatly divided loyalties among our citizens.

The second great area of dispute in Federal-Provincial relations, centres around the respective financial responsibilities of the Provincial and Federal Governments. The Prime Minister has indicated that during the two years in which the series of conferences that we look forward to would take place, financial matters may not impose themselves in a major way.

I think, perhaps, that it is impossible to divorce even the broadest consideration of the progress of our Confederation, from the major involvement of finances. I am sure he would agree that the financing of these programs is bound to be a consideration as we allocate them — or at least discuss the allocation of them — among the levels of government.

The traditional democratic view has been that the responsibility of the government to the electorate is enforced by the necessity of a government persuading the electorate that the taxes it imposes, are justifiable. I believe this principle is still the one which should be operative in our federal system. The government which spends public funds on desired programs, should face the disadvantage of collecting the funds necessary to support them.

It is on the public's willingness to pay that the provision of services must be based, and naturally, the proposal that brought grants without any conditions from the federal level to finance provincial responsibilities, come a great distance away from this specific cornerstone of democratic principle.

There are, of course, as I have already mentioned, two overriding responsibilities on the Federal Government in the financial field. The first is to effectively maintain the monetary and economic policy of the country — and this, of course, necessitates wide margins of discretion in the hands of the federal government for the setting of tax rates which prevail throughout the country.

It is the responsibility of the Federal Government to protect the value of the Canadian dollar, to maintain our country's competitive trade pace and to guide the growth of the national economy. The Federal Government, therefore, must be in a position, through surplus or deficit budgeting policies, to face the total demands in Canada for goods and services.

The fundamental question is whether the provincial fiscal powers are adequate for present day provincial needs and obligations.

We have yet to settle definitively what the respective access to

the fiscal resources of our country should be for the Federal and Provincial Governments and how this access is to be made effective. Of course we have not yet received in this area the recommendations of the Smith commission, although the report of the Carter commission federally has already been discussed in the House, at least superficially on two or three occasions.

It is certain, however, that the present arrangements are not satisfactory. It may well be that the provinces as well as the Federal Government should have complete taxing powers, both direct and indirect, to impose as they see fit. But whatever ultimate system of allocation of financial resources is reached, I believe that if effective democratic control is to be maintained, provincial governments, as well as the Federal Government, must take upon themselves the responsibility of raising funds to support the programs they believe the public wishes to have.

No matter what division of legislative and financial responsibilities is reached in the Canadian federal system, we are going to face a continuous and complex problem of co-ordinating Federal and Provincial policies. In a country like Canada, revolutionized by communications and technological developments, there is bound to be a marked interplay or interdependence of Federal and Provincial policies.

We have already seen in the past two decades the necessity of co-ordinating federally and provincially social and welfare policies. As we move into an area in politics where economic development is becoming a vital concern it will be even more necessary for federal and provincial policy to take into account the effect of their plans and programs on the interests and policies of their fellow governments.

Now this is something that the Prime Minister has raised on many occasions. The fact is that he as the leader of the Government of Ontario becomes involved in programs that perhaps he does not enthusiastically support, which have been enacted and brought into being by the Federal jurisdiction. He has perhaps entered many of these programs in a very foot-dragging manner without enthusiasm. Yet the fact remains that the Province of Ontario is participating at the direction of the government that the present Prime Minister heads, and even though he objects to this policy or has objected to it, still he has not had within himself and his government the strength to stand up against what he would consider, I believe, leadership in provincial affairs im-

posed from another level.

It is for this reason that we in this party support a program of cooperation between Provincial and Federal Governments on terms of equality to co-ordinate their policies for the benefit of the country as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you it is not my intention to provoke even the most easily provoked members of the House into barracking interjections. I believe that my statements concerning the attitude to shared programs by the Prime Minister of Ontario is a correct one, one that can be arrived at if you review the record and the Prime Minister's statements.

Now this does not imply the loss of rightful provincial powers, nor does it mean a relationship of subjection to Ottawa. This is an area that I have just been discussing. I think it is a desirable pattern for the future. In fact, I think it is essential if we are to achieve our goals in the 20th Century.

It is too easy for Government in Canada to refrain from dealing with problems because the BNA Act may have divided jurisdictions in such a way that no one government has complete power for tackling the job on its own. We live in a complex and integrated world. It is inescapable that the policies of one level of government will affect the responsibilities of the other. Either we will co-ordinate in confronting our problems or we shall fail to overcome them.

It is in this area — the need for intergovernmental cooperation and co-ordinated policies, fiscal and otherwise — that the discussion at the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference should really focus. There is always a danger in constructing mechanisms of governmental cooperation that these mechanisms themselves will develop an independent and perhaps irresponsible life. One of the principles of our democratic tradition is that responsibility is clearly focused on one government directly responsible in its own sphere of activity.

Co-ordinating committees between provincial and federal governments are absolutely essential as a measure of protection in this regard; but they should conduct their business publicly, insofar as is practicable, so that the Canadian electorate is aware of the arguments and considerations which lead to government action.

We must always be sure that the responsibility for the co-ordinated policies which are undertaken is clearly defined. It is my

view that although citizens and politicians often feel that it would be convenient and desirable to draw a sharp knife line between responsibilities, whether they are financial or otherwise, this is a dream that cannot be realized in the climate of flexibility that Canada needs. I believe Federal-Provincial Conferences and co-operation are something that will extend through the life of our country, which I hope is infinite.

It is for this reason that the Federal-Provincial conferences — and we are discussing one of them this afternoon — are going to be really another level of government in which careful preparation, real cooperation and involvement of the public, as has been suggested by the hon. leader of the NDP, become increasingly important.

I should like to turn now, to another problem, equally as important for the future of our Confederation as the constitutional questions I have just been discussing; indeed, I believe it is often confused in the public mind with the constitutional question of Federal-Provincial relations. This other crucial area, Mr. Speaker, is the question of what relationship should or can or must exist between French Canadians and English Canadians.

In some ways this is a more difficult problem than that of Federal-Provincial relations; for it concerns not only institutional arrangements or laws, it involves, sir, the delicate question of human relationship. It deals with individuals at the level of the language and culture. It treats problems which are not amenable simply to changes in legislation or institutions. It deals with matters of viewpoint and of the spirit.

Fundamentally, the problems in this area will be decided by how we as Canadians look at our own country; it will depend upon the idea that we as citizens have of our nation.

I think historically English Canadians have tended to consider our country as a greatly expanded version of their own small or large community, and they feel that wherever they go they would or should find areas of the country that are just like their own home communities. They have tended to think of other Canadians as being fundamentally like themselves.

French Canadians have never been able to look at Canada in this way. There has always been the impression that once they left home or once they left the areas with which they had familiarity, they were in fact entering if not a hostile, at least a foreign area. They have always been conscious of sharing a country with

other people who have a markedly different culture and language, with a different conception of the nature of the country itself.

It seems to me that if Canada is to flourish as it should, English Canadians will have to recognize and understand that after all Canada is a very diverse country. I think they must welcome the positive advantages which the diversity of our nation provides. We must recognize that because of diversity we have an opportunity to build a distinctive and distinguished country which could well set an example for other nations of the world.

We must welcome the idea that the persistence of French Canadian culture is a natural, necessary and desirable phenomenon. Ultimately we must accept the existence of at least two cultures in Canada. We must be conscious that to be good Canadian citizens requires sympathy for the culture and aspirations of fellow Canadians from two different races and certainly we realize in Ontario from a multiplicity of races, who have come into our province more than any other province in our nation, and who have contributed greatly to the better aspects of our provincial development at the cultural level.

This in the end will, I think, be the key to the development of the Canadian Confederation of Tomorrow.

There has been a great deal of public talk urging a drastic overhaul of our constitution itself. It was called for by the amendment proposed by the hon. leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament just a few days ago. The constitution of 1867, it is often suggested, must be outmoded a century later.

We should not rule out the possibility that such sweeping reform may become necessary, but we should be cautious in approaching it. Constitutions are generally the product of growth and evolution, a history of constitutional response to specific and immediate problems over the years.

Before attempting a complete overhaul we would be better advised to be sure that the present constitution could not be moderately adapted to work more effectively than it now appears to do. Before insisting upon a new framework, we would be wise to see what could be done with the old at a fullblown constitutional conference, which of course is not what we are debating this afternoon. This would simply give the fringes of the attitudes pertaining to the development of our country a platform on which the middle and moderate approach would simply be overwhelmed and overcome. A full-blown constitutional conference, I believe,

would not be in the best interest of the progress of our nation at this time.

I believe the constitution is more than just a written document. It consists also of constitutional practices and conventions, judicial decisions and traditions of our society.

The constitution is perhaps a more flexible thing than we usually think. The written portion of a constitution is a formal and usually rigid document. It is designed to give permanent and entrenched status to the sets of principles, objectives and rules under which a society agrees to live.

A constitution should reflect and sanction mutually agreed purposes of the people. It should, to use the current term, embody a consensus of what we as a society wish to achieve.

It may be true that the consensus of 1867 no longer prevails. That consensus is rooted in another world of long ago and the situation of 1967 is vastly different to that of 1867. It is a drastically altered world with new problems, new aspirations and a new sense of purpose.

But I do not believe that we have as yet reached in words and ideas the new consensus that should come before a new constitution. A general discussion of constitutional questions may be beneficial in helping to achieve that consensus, but it would be shortsighted, and I believe disastrous, for us to attempt a formal constitutional revision until we are sure that a consensus does exist in Canada on what changes are required.

I am sure that all of us are here today as supporters of a strong federal system of government. Such a system requires at both levels governments pursuing their jurisdictional responsibilities with energy and with sufficient resources to meet the responsibilities. The vital element of this democratic federalism has always been the identification of power with responsibility. That is, both the regional and central governments must each have power commensurate with the tasks imposed upon them and must be responsible to their electorates for the exercise of that power.

Federalism rests upon a healthy tension between the central and regional levels of government. Each deals with the kind of problems it is best equipped to handle. If either one level or the other becomes too powerful, if it encroaches on responsibilities or prerogatives of the other, then the balance of the federal system is destroyed.

I am sure too that we all believe in a strong Canada. We know

that what is good for Canada is good for us as citizens of Ontario. We believe that Canada needs effective federal power, just as it needs provincial governments with effective independence in their own jurisdiction.

In approaching the forthcoming conference, the approach of Ontario must be to deal with these problems from a viewpoint based on the interest not of our own province alone but on the whole interest of our nation. The conference, if it is to succeed in its purposes without aggravating our problems, must be carefully planned.

No subject is more important to us than the future of our country. No subject deserves to be treated with more care and caution. A conference on the future of Confederation should not be undertaken in such a way as to lead unwittingly to political controversy. It should be a means of uniting Canada and not dividing it.

We should avoid, by accident, giving such a conference the complexion of being undertaken for political expediency or advantage. Nor should such a conference be simply a camouflaged attack by some governments to encroach upon the powers of others. To be successful such a conference must involve the wholehearted and willing acceptance of all governments which have the responsibility for the future of our country.

It is for that reason that we put forward this afternoon an amendment to the resolution endorsing the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference. As I have made clear, we support this conference in principle, but we cannot but regret that the Ontario government has been less than diligent, even if unintentionally, in seeking the cooperation and partnership and support of the Government of Canada in proposing such a conference.

No matter how the Government responds either by interjection or through the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, it is evident from correspondence that the Prime Minister himself has tabled here, and from reports that have been available from other sources, through the newspapers, that there is the feeling, however justified, by the Prime Minister of Canada himself, that perhaps the plan that the Prime Minister unveiled in the Speech from the Throne some months ago might unwittingly not serve the best interests that all of us hold as the goal of such a conference.

It is, after all, the Federal Government which is the only Government elected by all the citizens of this country. It is the Government whose predominant responsibility is strengthening Canadian unity

and evolving policies which meet the national needs of the whole of Canada.

No conference in the constitutional area will be helpful without the Federal Government's enthusiastic participation, and the Prime Minister of Canada has already indicated his concern at the way in which the preliminaries to this conference have been conducted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hope that you and my colleagues in the House will hear my view on this matter. They obviously disagree with them very strongly and this is certainly their right. We in this House are prepared to settle the matter by vote and I presume that some time this will come about. But surely the views of the Opposition can be put clearly and as forcefully as within my command and I would ask, sir, that the members of the Legislature give them the attention that I believe they deserve at this time.

The Prime Minister of Canada has made arrangements for an important first step, a meeting at Ottawa on July 5, with the Provincial Premiers which will be a forerunner to the conference that Ontario is proposing. Now the proposal for the July 5 conference was greeted in this Legislature, I must say on both sides, with the attitude that perhaps it was superficially arrived at.

I feel that really this is an unfair approach to an invitation extended to the Premiers and Prime Ministers, as some of them designate themselves, of the Provinces of Canada.

At a time when the attention of every citizen in this country will be riveted on the actual date of our Centennial, it has been criticized that the Federal Conference has not been adequately planned. I suppose there has never been a conference yet in which, someone has not brought forward this criticism. It has been said that insufficient time will be made available in order to carry out the conversations and exchanges of views that would be necessary.

The Prime Minister has indicated that he feels that he would like to convene the Provincial Premiers for two days. I suppose they are all busy men and my own feeling is that this would be a start and that it would be an inadequate period of time in which to do anything other than put official positions, and maybe exchange views in some of the more informal opportunities that would be offered. But to say that the conference, which the Prime Minister of Canada is calling for July 5, in any way has a different motivation from that which has been proposed by the Prime Minister of Ontario, is unfair.

The Prime Minister has said that his conference, our conference,

in Ontario, will be the first. Obviously it will not. It will be the second. The first will be the one that is held in the week of our Centennial celebrations and it will go on as the first in a series of conferences. The next one is being conducted under the aegis of the province of Ontario, and is called by the Prime Minister of this Province. It is hopeful that we can assume that the conference, over the two years that the Prime Minister has referred to, can be conducted in other areas across the nation—and surely this is what will come about.

As I say, it may well prove desirable, in the light of the July 5 discussions, to place the later Confederation conference within the context of a continuing series of meetings held in all regions of Canada. It is an unhappy sign that the Ontario Government has been insensitive to the requirements, which plain commonsense dictates, of seeking the cooperation of the Federal Government which has a predominant responsibility for the affairs of the country.

The most difficult way to proceed to a satisfactory result, is to make ringing public declarations and take dramatic public stands. It is unfortunate that in the present case, the Ontario Government has preferred negotiations by newspaper publicity that they themselves did not seek, rather than careful and quiet diplomacy to achieve a successful conference.

For example, the exchange of letters between the two Prime Ministers was finally tabled here but we have not, as yet, learned any of the details from the Government of this Province as to the invitation he has received from the Prime Minister of Canada. I, for one, do not know when he received it. The implication was that it was received just a few days ago, and yet, in newspaper reports, the indication is that it was sent out many weeks ago. I would be interested in knowing some of these details.

I do hope, as the planning of the conference progresses, that the Ontario Government will be careful, indeed zealous, in seeking the cooperation of all the governments which are concerned with the questions which should be discussed. I believe it is a commentary on the comments that I have been making that, according to press reports and these are all we have to go on the Prime Minister of Canada feels that, under the circumstances, he cannot attend. I join with the Prime Minister of Ontario in hoping that at least a delegate from the Federal jurisdiction will be able to take part.

It has also been said that two other Provincial jurisdictions do

not feel that the proposal that the Prime Minister of Ontario has made, and is making in this resolution, is appropriate for the work that we have at hand.

Whether or not the Prime Minister and his supporters, and others in the House, agree with that view, you must accept the fact that it is held by responsible citizens in this nation, citizens who are elected to operate the responsibilities of government in their own sphere.

I do not suppose there is a real parallel — to go back to the Rowell-Sirois Commission — when they came to Ontario, and yet there is this feeling. Why jeopardize what surely must be one of the most important programs that could be put before this Legislature, or before the people of Canada, by improperly conducting the negotiations which lead up to it?

A well-planned conference, one endorsed and accepted by all the Provinces and the Federal Government, one which included all governments, both I and my party would welcome enthusiastically.

We intend to vote for the main resolution supporting the proposal for the conference.

The purpose of our amendment is two-fold: First to bring home to the Government our concern over the unsatisfactory way in which the preliminaries of this desirable conference have been handled; and second to indicate our strong conviction that to make this conference a practical success the Ontario Government must actively pursue a path of cooperation with the Federal Government in the further planning of conference arrangements.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Mr. V. M. Singer, that the motion before us be amended by adding thereto the following:

But this House regrets that such an important conference is proposed without recognizing the unique position of the Government of Canada which has a predominant responsibility for strengthening Canadian unity and shaping the course of Confederation.

Remarks by

DONALD C. MacDONALD

Leader of the New Democratic Party

Mr. Speaker:

My first words would be to repeat the enthusiastic support of the New Democratic Party for the proposal embodied in this resolution, that the Province of Ontario should host a Confederation of Tomorrow Conference in the year 1967.

My only complaint or objection, and it is one that I made by way of interjection earlier in the debate, is that this manifestation of a willingness on the part of the Government to exercise leadership in the historic role that Ontario has always played, and I think must continue to play in Confederation, should have been taken at some earlier date. However I think it is a good year for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker.

First, because of the nature of the conference. The Prime Minister has indicated that it is going to be an informal conference, that it is not going to be a decision making conference; and it is a conference that can be free of the controversy surrounding fiscal differences. Therefore, in that kind of atmosphere, it is possible to have a family discussion on family problems.

Second, I think it is a good year because of the general mood of the Canadian people. Canadians today are perhaps for the first time in the last 25 years, conceivably since the end of the war, beginning to capture a feeling for their nation. Perhaps Expo symbolizes the change; but hitherto there has been a desperate lack as we vainly sought to achieve some greater sense of identity.

In this atmosphere, I think the Canadian people will respond to the proposition of a Confederation of Tomorrow Conference. Indeed if I can say it as kindly as possible in the relatively non-partisan atmosphere of this debate, in the absence of having our Provincial Centennial project, because it will not be completed this year, maybe this will be a substitute for the year 1967.

Third, and most important however, Mr. Speaker, I think this conference is a timely conference because of developments that have taken place in Canada in the last year or so. I think these events created an atmosphere and conditions under which we can come to grips with some of the really knotty problems which have been tending to tear this nation apart.

Now as a person who has had the good fortune to spend some of his formative teenage years and some of his early working years

in the Province of Quebec, I feel that I have some feeling for that province and some contact with that province. But I confess to you Mr. Speaker, that each time I have the opportunity to go back I am impressed with the fantastic changes that are taking place and with the feeling that one is out of touch with what is happening in the Province of Quebec.

Therefore, I think it is useful to take a look, and I do it again quoting from a couple of sources that I used earlier in my contribution to the Budget debate, at the views of competent observers who are capable of catching the nuances of the Quebec scene because they are living there and they are working there.

The first one happens to be a man that many people in the Province of Ontario know, namely Dr. Edward McWhinney who was formerly here on the staff of the University of Toronto and is now at both McGill and Laval. His main point was that in the Province of Quebec, the noisy overtones of the "quiet revolution," this strained effort on the part of the French Canadian people to achieve some new status symbol for their aspirations, now tends to be dropping into the background.

What is coming to the foreground is the realization that the basic problems they faced in the "quiet revolution" are the social and economic problems which, when they examine them, are common to all of the rest of the country. Therefore, with this great common ground, the tendency for a gap between Quebec and the rest of Canada that would have made the idea of sitting down informally or formally in a conference something of a dangerous process within the Canadian family, that gap has now narrowed.

Let me quote, for example, briefly, from a comment of Dr. McWhinney. He said:

"The shift of the Quebec revolution towards economic goals and the consequent idealization of the Confederation debate generally has enabled a new concentration on fairly concrete and specific problems and has facilitated the development of a new accommodating spirit.

"A state is above all an act of reason, not an act of love, Mr. Marchand said in a recent speech in Montreal. It is the new emphasis on the actual and the immediate, as distinct from the essentially abstract and philosophical and the necessarily long range and distant, that has brought awareness that many of Quebec's most important aspirations are shared equally by other provinces; especially those that, like Quebec, have an

existing industrial base and are hoping to build upon and extend that base with consequent emphasis on education, health and welfare as prime community goals.

"It is the realization that Quebec may not be so different in its needs and social objectives from Ontario, British Columbia and other industrial provinces that explains in large part Mr. Johnson's warm response to Mr. Robarts' call for a Confederation of Tomorrow Conference. There is reason to believe that such a conference would quickly become concerned with practical problems of Confederation and that it would not easily degenerate into angry rhetoric or charges and counter-charges."

Now that is the end of the quotation, Mr. Speaker.

I confess that a year or so ago, if this kind of a conference were proposed I would have had some reservations about the wisdom of the proposal for the very reasons which Professor McWhinney now says have passed. The angry rhetoric is likely to be replaced by a careful consideration of the basic problems facing Quebec as they realize that these are the same problems that are faced by the rest of Canada.

Essentially the same idea, Mr. Speaker, was made by Claude Ryan, and again I want to quote briefly from him.

He was reporting on the conference that I had mentioned briefly in my Budget contribution, a conference in which he was struck with the manner in which the whole mood of the conference changed when the delegates from Quebec ceased talking in general abstractions and the yearning to get down to basics in the specifics of the constitution and their unhappiness with those basics and specifics. He said automatically he recognized a different reaction on the part of those spokesmen from English-speaking Canada at the conference. This was something that he could relate to.

This is a comment of Mr. Ryan's. Speaking as French Canadian to French Canadian, and this was repeated for our benefit in the *Globe and Mail* on March 7:

"It is up to us to prepare a definite list of things which are not working in the present constitutional system. As long as we have not done this we must be resigned to partial misunderstanding by our partners. The English Canadian is very wary of generalized ideas and abstract statements. If we believe in our historical diagnosis we should be able to state it in exact

terms that force more detailed discussions.”

He then continued later, Mr. Speaker:

“If we take pains to prepare for it, it will offer us an excellent opportunity of defining our position to the rest of our country. One must, therefore, rejoice at the support Quebec’s Premier Daniel Johnson has already given to his Ontario colleague’s project.”

Let me pause here, Mr. Speaker, to the extent that I can, and I think it is desirable, one should keep partnership out of this debate. On the other hand let us be realistic; anything that has to do with politics is going to have political overtones and a discussion of Confederation has very much to do with politics. I think it is useful to note the comment of Claude Ryan and one of the most respected and authoritative and responsible and moderate spokesmen and students of the province of Quebec:

Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, Lester Pearson, now elevated to a Cabinet post.

“And those who think that constitutional debate is so much nationalistic twaddle, might reply that a confrontation such as that recommended by Mr. Robarts could well serve to show that the so-called basic grievances of Quebec are in reality fairly limited. If it were simply a question of discussion between individuals such an opinion would be plausible, but I am so convinced of the contrary, that is, that the debate far exceeds the level of individuals and calls up the most fundamental social and political realities, that I would not waste a minute checking the credit rating of those who believe in the need for revision.

“I am even prepared to state that in addition to the systematic and detailed criticism suggested above, we should immediately undertake to define a “reasonable minimum” which would be acceptable to the large majority of Quebecers, above and beyond dispute between various schools of thought.

“I am not thinking of an election manifesto or slogan, rather I have in mind very precise and concrete proposals on which wide-spread agreement among French Canadians could be established, and which could then be presented with solidarity to our English-speaking partners as a basis for discussing the new entente.

“Jean Lesage, the former Quebec Premier, sketched such an agreement, based on the double objective: Equality for the

two cultures in Canada and a special status for Quebec. Mr. Johnson has not used such precise terms, at least insofar as the second objective is concerned, but judging by his words and actions since last June one gets the impression that he has something fairly similar in mind.

"To us this formula seems to be the most likely to preserve what is essential in the federal principle, and at the same time to give Quebec's new aspirations their due. It is more likely to do so."

He is referring here, if I may interject, Mr. Speaker, to the proposition of a special status for Quebec, and I want to get back to that a little later —

"It is more likely to do so than the formula of associated states which at the outset repels even the most open-minded English Canadians as well as a large number of French Canadians. It is also more suitable than the formula for preserving the status quo, which Mr. Trudeau defends with a great deal of courage, but without much support from other French Canadians."

Now I put that to the House, Mr. Speaker, as the comment of a responsible moderate and authoritative French Canadian. But I do it, if I may return to my initial comment, in the context of why this justifies this kind of conference at the present time. I think not only the nature of the conference, not only the mood of the Canadian people as a whole, but more important the developing climate in the discussion of the Confederation debate has reached a point where I think this conference can make a very real contribution.

I want to make a few comments with regard to the origins of the conference. There have been references made earlier in the debates, as well as in editorials and in politicking out in the hustings, with regard to the politically inspired nature of the conference. I have noted the number of people who have drawn attention to the fact that, in the first instance, I was one of those who felt that it was politically inspired and that I now have changed my mind and am in strong support of the proposition of the conference.

Mr. Speaker, on the basis of the evidence originally available — and that evidence incidentally now becomes extremely important in light of the amendment that has been put before this House by the Liberal Opposition — on the basis of the evidence which was available at that time, it had the appearance of being a politically

inspired conference. It first appeared, as far as we were concerned in this Legislature, in the Speech from the Throne. Automatically from Ottawa there was a reaction from the Prime Minister indicating or implying, that he had not been consulted, that he was hearing about it for the first time and that he was not going to get into this political game on the eve of a provincial election in the Province of Ontario.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what are the facts?

As I understand the facts that are now available, the Prime Minister of the Province of Ontario raised this idea in the closing moments of the Federal-Provincial conference last October. First I should say that the Prime Minister has indicated there were no objections expressed to it—but the Prime Minister of Canada made the comment that since this was Mr. Robarts' proposal he could follow through on it. I am now persuaded, Mr. Speaker, that this is another instance, if I can put as kindly as possible, where Mr. Pearson, with all his admirable qualities, misses the nuances of a situation, particularly the political nuances of the situation.

However, Mr. Speaker, if he had missed them then, I do not see how it can be justifiably argued at Ottawa that they did not later know the nature of the conference and what the Prime Minister of Ontario had in mind, because he spelled it out in a speech in the city of Montreal in the month of November.

So I am just a little bit puzzled, and I am going to leave it there, as to why the Prime Minister of Canada should feel when the idea emerged in our Speech from the Throne that it was a completely new idea and that the Federal Government had not been consulted at all. I was not privy to the intimate discussions that took place in that conference, the hon. gentleman who is the Prime Minister of this province was privy to it and the Prime Minister of Canada. If you read the letter of the Prime Minister of Canada, you will find that he does not deny any of the facts that I have just related. He just persists in his conclusion that this is an unconstitutional thing, for the province to move and call this kind of a conference.

Mr. Speaker, the question of whose right it is to call the conference, is not the prime point and so I leave it there. The prime point, Mr. Speaker, as I have already pointed out in the Budget debate, is that surely what is more important here, is not the legal prerogative of calling a conference, but whether it can serve a useful purpose at this important juncture in our history.

In my view, it can serve a useful purpose and, therefore, I do not

care who called the conference. In addition, my conviction is that all roads to Canadian unity do not necessarily lead through Ottawa, and that major provinces in this country can take the initiative in bringing together, for informal non-decision making purposes, the kind of conference we are now talking about here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has also indicated, in the origin of this conference, the work of the advisory committee, and I just want to make a brief comment here in passing. Quite frankly, I found the reports of the advisory committee a little disappointing.

In the preface, Mr. Speaker, which was prepared by the chairman of the committee, Ian Macdonald, makes the comment which I can, perhaps, use best to make my reaction clear. He says:

"Although the following studies deal essentially with technical matters, the committee has devoted much of its time to the broader question of goals. The flavour of that process is more difficult to capture in the printed word or in a set of reports."

So by implication he is saying, and I think it is a fact, that most of that process, its flavour and its substance, is not included in these reports, they are mostly technical documents.

Mr. Speaker, we are technicians in this House and, therefore, these documents are going to be useful but surely at this stage what is even more important than the technical advice in the papers we can get on technical problems, is the broad goals. I greatly regret that some idea of these broad goals, or the thinking of this very outstanding collection of men from the academic, business and other worlds, should not be made available to this House because I think, quite frankly, this is what we very much need at the present time.

There is not discussion of this, this is the illusive quality, suggests Ian Macdonald. The Prime Minister referred to the wider aims of Confederation in the course of his earlier remarks. I think this is what we are trying to come to grips with, the wider aims of Confederation, and, unfortunately, most of these three weighty tomes do not help us very much in that instance.

I want to turn to another aspect of the Prime Minister's introductory comments and that is with regard to the mechanics of the conference itself. In the first place, the Prime Minister says that it is going to be only for two days. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, even for the agenda which the Prime Minister himself has given, to say nothing of his invitation to others to add to that agenda, two days will provide no more than an opportunity to scratch the surface.

I would think, in the kind of atmosphere that I have attempted to detail, that we have now reached the stage where we can get down to the "guts" of the issue if I may put it in blunt, Anglo-Saxon terms.

If there is reason for criticism, and I think there is reason for criticism, in the proposition of the conference the Prime Minister of Canada is calling between lunch and tea sometime early in July, when the Queen is going to be there to play hostess — this is fine, it is going to be a congenial little gathering. But does anybody have any illusions, for one moment, that you are going to be able to come to grips with anything of substance between luncheon and tea on the day the Queen is visiting Ottawa?

Mr. Speaker, I think, essentially the same kind of criticisms, somewhat more moderately perhaps, can be brought to the Prime Minister's proposal. If we are going to really come to grips with this issue now, I suggest a minimum of four days — indeed, I am almost tempted to go back to my proposition of a whole week, but more of that in a moment.

Second, the Prime Minister suggests that each province should have the right to choose the composition of its own delegations. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that one really has to do this; you cannot write to the head of a government and, in effect, instruct who is going to be in his delegation, but I would hope that the kind of conference which the Prime Minister has suggested he would like to have, is mainly a conference that involves not only the government and the party that happens to be in power, but, I presume from his comments, also the spokesmen from other parties, and indeed from the civil service and from the public at large.

If the head of government so wishes, I would hope that if this is his concept of the conference, that he would set it forth in a polite, but firm fashion, in his invitations, so that there might be some prospect that other provinces would duplicate what, I trust, he has indicated he is going to be doing in the Province of Ontario.

Third, the Prime Minister talks about a series of conferences. Fine, I have no objection to the proposition of a series of conferences, I noted with interest that Claude Ryan, in the article from which I have just quoted, thought of 1970 as being the earliest date at which we might be able, maybe, to sit down for some real decision-making. In other words, he envisaged three years of conferences of one kind or another before we could get to that decision-making stage, so I have no objection to the Prime

Minister's conception of this as being the first of a series of conferences.

But I do not see why, again, given the favourable atmosphere that exists at the present time, that you should downgrade the conference to two days rather than four or, if I may now go on to my next point, that you should not try to use this conference to really give the People of Ontario and, if possible, through cooperation with the other provinces, the people of all of Canada, a feeling that they are finally going to have an opportunity to participate in the reshaping of Confederation.

The Prime Minister made some comments, for example, about "the wider aims of Confederation and the understanding and active participation in Confederation to date." My question, in light of what the Prime Minister has said, is, how is he going to achieve this? Surely the Prime Minister does not think he is going to achieve participation of the public at large through the publication of these debates — these papers from the advisory committee.

They have received some comment from the press, but painfully little. I cannot help but be struck by the paucity of public discussion at the editorial level on the basic problems of Confederation today as compared, if you go back and look, to the editorial columns of the "dailies" in the province of Ontario prior to 1867, and the shaping of Confederation.

You had the most vigorous kind of debate and the people who were the leaders in the shaping of Confederation back in those days, periodically left conferences and went out to public meetings to which the people flocked in numbers that you could not get out today. Because they will not come out to meetings today, I come back to another point that I have made, about which, the Prime Minister spoke favourably, but rather vaguely, and that is the whole concept of whether or not we cannot make this conference something of a teach-in, at least within the Province of Ontario.

If you cannot get the cooperation of the other provinces to make it a national teach-in, since the conference will presumably be held in the fall when the universities and schools will be back in session, when "town meetings" in every little town or city in this province might be brought together to have some broadcasts from the conference and to have local resource people lead the discussions.

In other words, some imaginative use of the electronic media — to give the people of Canada an opportunity to participate, in a real sense, in the whole discussion with regard to the shaping of the

future of the country in which they live.

I repeat this to the Prime Minister now and urge him, with appreciation of his comments on my proposals, to implement some of them. Let him take them as his own, forget where he got them from because I know in the minds of some this will discredit them; but take them as his own. For example, if it is possible, when he finds out what provinces across the country are going to participate, see if he cannot get steering committees from these other provinces to share in getting local television and radio media to participate in shaping this kind of network. The final point I would like to make with regard to the mechanics, Mr. Speaker, is again directly related.

It is the only major worry that I have — and I trust it is not really valid, but I would like to have some evidence to suggest that it is not valid — and that is the amount of preparation that is going to go into this conference. Until now, I have not seen anything of the kind of preparation that I think is necessary.

My hope would be that the Prime Minister, as part of that whole preparation, and involving whoever he is going to have in the delegation, and involving the people of the province of Ontario, would then begin to get the media involved so that they will feel that this is finally their conference, and that they are going to have an opportunity to take part in reshaping the future of their country.

Having made those general comments, Mr. Speaker, I want now to turn to two observations concerning the constitutional details. I am not going to get into the substance of specifics, because I think this might be more appropriately dealt with in the conference. The Prime Minister has indicated some of the items which he thinks should be on the agenda of the conference, but there are some major problems involved in the general approach; some basic problems that affect all of the issues that may come up — and I want to try to discuss those this afternoon.

Much of the discussion concerning reshaping the Canadian Confederation has focused on our two founding nations or societies, the French and the English. This is understandable and justifiable, because if the relationship between the two is not resolved, Canada's future is going to be very uncertain indeed, and realizing the full potential of our economic, and our social and cultural development, will be seriously jeopardized. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, there are other questions which must concern us. There

is the repatriation of our constitution, together with a reasonable amendment procedure. There is the revision and modernization of the constitution itself.

We must come to some consensus as to our national objectives in the next century, and spell them out in a declaration of national purpose which can serve as a preamble to the constitution. We must consider as one of the necessary and characteristic functions of government in the second half of the twentieth century, how the functions are to be allocated among the various jurisdictions, and how we will raise and allocate the revenues which will enable us to carry out these functions.

However, a constitutional preamble or declaration of purpose must recognize exclusively the so-called third Canada. I refer to the nearly one-third of the Canadian people, and it is a growing third, who come from that host of backgrounds that are neither French nor English. In most cases, these people are Canadians by choice, not by birth. Their loyalty to their chosen homeland is as strong as that of a native born. Often in the great Confederation debate they found themselves standing on the sidelines. They have protested that their existence, their interest, and contribution should not be ignored, nor appear to be ignored in the discussions which will shape our national course for the years ahead.

Acknowledging their contribution and according them a rightful place, sir, in the basic partnership on which this nation has been built — this is a challenge second only to resolving the problems and the relationship of our two founding peoples.

Most of us agreed that The British North America Act is inadequate as a constitution, and misleading as a description of the Canadian government. If Canadians can muster the necessary imagination and emotional energy for a total revision of their organic law, then a declaration of national purpose, which would include acknowledgment of the new Canadians in our midst — a formal constitutional acknowledgment, sir, would be a fitting preamble to the constitution. My hope would be that the Confederation of Tomorrow Conferences would be a start to explore this possibility.

If events prove that re-writing the constitution is capable of early achievement, then let us press forward towards a purely Canadian document, unencumbered by past colonial associations with Westminster. But if events suggest that re-writing the constitution will be a longer process, let us, in any case, proceed with

the drafting of a declaration of national purpose. Such a declaration can be given constitutional force, either within the constitution, such as the American bill of rights, or outside it, as an independent document, such as the British bill of rights.

To have force and meaning it would have to be endorsed, not merely by the Federal Government, as was the case of the Canadian bill of rights, but by all the Provincial Legislatures as well. Consent to a statement of national purpose, to create a bilingual and bicultural society, and at the same time to acknowledge the enrichment of our national life by the many cultures of new Canadians, might be slow and difficult to obtain, but without provincial consent, it can never be obtained.

Indeed most of the powers to make the national purpose a reality, lie within the provincial sphere.

Here again, I suggest that Ontario has a historic role to play in Canadian Confederation, and her leadership is vital. Not only do we have a long time association with French Canada, not only do Franco-Ontarians represent the largest non-English group in our population, but a growing proportion of our people, the largest number of new Canadians in this nation, are found in Ontario.

Within our borders, we have gone far in acknowledging and strengthening the working partnership on which this nation as a whole must now be built. No province has a greater interest than Ontario in seeking some formal constitutional recognition of the real Canada, the broad Canada, which will shape our destiny in the centuries to come.

Indeed, within the multi-cultural society of Canada, there is a place for encouraging the range of language and cultures which enrich Canada today. I noted with interest that volume three of the background papers from the advisory committee on Confederation, records a recommendation of some briefs to the B and B commission that financial support for part-time, privately sponsored language schools and classes, should be considered as a cultural, rather than an educational effort.

At the level of higher education, a start has already been made in some Canadian universities to establish courses, and even departments, which will strengthen the varied cultural strains which are now embedded in the Canadian mosaic. Having emphasized the need for acknowledging the broader Canadian partnership, I would return again to the core of the problem in Canadian Confederation, namely relations with French Canada.

The complaint of French Canadians, as the Prime Minister himself earlier noted, is that we have fallen far short of the bilingual and bicultural society envisaged by the Fathers of Confederation in 1867.

As Professor Alexander Brady expressed it, and I quote:

“Bilingualism was mainly reduced to the simple act of translation, rather than the coexistence of two languages, and translation was cumbersome and time-consuming.”

As a result, Professor Brady points out, young French Canadians increasingly feel that since, apparently, they can never be accepted along with their language, as full partners in the federal state, they see little reason to feel attached to it. The more pride they take in their own culture, the more intolerable is the discrimination against their language.

This growing friction has produced a marked tendency, in recent years, for Quebec to look inward — to operate on the assumption that if French Canadians are to realize their economic and social and cultural aspirations, they will have to be within the nation's state of Quebec. This tendency represents the greatest single threat to the future of Canadian unity.

As long as we fail to realize a greater measure of bilingualism and biculturalism in the Canadian society as a whole, this tendency in Quebec will strengthen; indeed, it is inevitable that there will grow up a generation of French Canadians who have benefited from education far beyond their parents, and who will feel their future even more strongly associated with Quebec as opposed to the rest of Canada. There must be opportunities for release of those forces throughout the rest of Canada.

No doubt the greatest single measure of release will be in the realization of a bilingual federal civil service, which more fully represents the coexistence of the two languages rather than a simple translation. Such is the avowed objective of the government at Ottawa.

But more can be achieved in all of the provinces, particularly in the field of education. The opportunity to learn French as a spoken language must be made more widely available. Any Canadian who does not have reasonable access to the two languages, and the two cultures, is being deprived of that which is his right by virtue of being a Canadian.

That does not mean, to borrow the current phrase, “ramming French down everybody's throat”, but it does mean making French

a language study from as early as grade 3 in primary school. A second language, or indeed, a third or a fourth, has long been the mark of an educated person. And surely in Canada, French is the obvious second language.

Beyond the opportunities for English Canadians to learn French, there is an equally important point — the opportunity for French Canadians to get an education in their mother tongue wherever possible, a part of which would be learning to speak English. Here again, I strongly feel that Ontario has a historic leadership role to play. It is a role flowing naturally from our traditions and from our stated government policy.

For example, primary French schools within the separate school system emerged many years ago in Ontario, and they have had a long and varied history in this province. Indeed, in the city of Welland, where no separate schools were available, bilingual primary schools have been established within the non-denominational public school system.

At the secondary school level, the development has been slow. Some years ago, the Government authorized the teaching of two subjects in French in those schools where there was a sufficient number of French-speaking children to make this possible. Later, by Ministerial order — and I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to how easily this was done, by Ministerial order — the two were increased to four, so that in secondary schools, in areas with a concentration of French population, there is already in the curriculum, *l'histoire, la géographie, le latin, le français*.

The Minister has argued, in the past, that the extension of this kind of program was held up chiefly by the shortage of speakers. So wherever that shortage of speakers does not exist I would urge the government to assist in the fuller realization of their own stated policy.

For example, a situation recently developed in Sudbury which offered, in my view, a golden opportunity. The Jesuit order has announced that they can no longer operate the Sacred Heart college. Here was a student body, mostly drawn from the Sudbury area, with teachers available. It would have seemed to me that the way was open for the establishment of a secondary education, fully in French, within the existing public secondary school system, at least for those students who were local residents. Since this is presumably the general objective toward which this government has been working for years, I would have hoped that the Provincial

Government would have assisted the local board of education in making such possible.

But so far as I know there was no offer of assistance or cooperation by the Department of Education. The situation seems to have been met for the moment by the offer last week by Notre Dame college, administered by the French language Grey Nuns of the Cross, to absorb all students from Sacred Heart into their day classes. So that the opportunity, for the moment, of developing French language secondary education in the existing public secondary school system is postponed.

As Professor Brady points out in his background paper:

"A new chapter in the story of bilingual education in Ontario opened in February of 1967 in a conference of l'association Canadienne-Française d'éducation d'Ontario. In more than half a century this association has unsuccessfully requested state-supported denominational secondary schools. In its February meeting it agreed to ask for bilingual secondary schools integrated in the public school system."

In short, Mr. Speaker, the way is now open for the Government to act in fulfilment of its long term objective, instead of pursuing the kind of slow development which will offer little or no hope of providing a genuine bilingual and bicultural atmosphere in which the French Canadian would feel at home without forsaking his cultural heritage.

Here is an opportunity for leadership, strictly within the Ontario provincial field, which would make a real contribution to easing the tensions which are at the heart of the Confederation crisis. It would represent the kind of real hope for getting fulfilment of bilingualism and biculturalism outside of Quebec which would undercut the separatist tendencies in that province, based as they are on the conviction that there is no hope elsewhere in Canada to achieve this.

Moreover, leadership from Ontario in this connection could have a profound psychological effect, not only on French Canadians in Quebec but elsewhere throughout Canada.

In discussing "Ontario's role" in this paper, Professor Brady emphasizes this point:

"A policy by Ontario for enlarging and entrenching the cultural rights of this minority will, therefore, be significant to a considerable proportion of the people of French extraction outside Quebec. It will testify that the most populous English-

speaking province respects and seeks to preserve within its boundaries the French fact.”

Now there, in my view Mr. Speaker, is one of the basic problems: The relation of English and French Canada and what we can do to realize the original concept of Canada as a bilingual and bicultural nation, and therefore relieve the tensions at the heart of Confederation.

I want to now grasp another of the nettles that one has to contend with in this very complex problem. I want to attempt to clarify, at least, what the New Democratic Party means when it refers to the special status of Quebec. Both the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition acknowledged earlier that this term is subject to many interpretations, and clarification is an urgent need at the moment.

French Canada has traditions, social and cultural, which it is determined to maintain and strengthen. No Canadian who has any appreciation of our history will deny the unique nature of these traditions or oppose their continuing development.

From its beginnings our country has been built on an acceptance and a recognition of these traditions, from the British conquest of 1759, through the Constitutional Act of 1791, The Act of Union of 1840, to Confederation itself. In this respect, Quebec has always had a special or unique status — Québec n'est pas une province comme les autres.

Special or unique status does not imply privilege above the other provinces. What it does mean, in the realities of the 1960's, is that policies arrived at for all Canada will frequently need to be applied differently in Quebec. Our constitutional forms and practices must be flexible enough to permit this.

Recognition of the particular unique position of Quebec does not mean that a comparable position is historically open to, or currently in the interest of, other provinces. Quebec's position is, by definition, one which she enjoys by virtue of her unique social and cultural background and traditions. It is these traditions which are unique to Quebec, which alone entitled her to apply, in a way different from the other provinces, the broad national policies of this country.

But I stress again that particular treatment is not, and must not be, privileged or preferred treatment. As far as I know there is no policy of the Federal Government which does, or should, grant more to Quebec than to any other province. Quebec's entitlement

to opt out simply means that she receives in respect to any particular program an equivalent amount of money to apply in the same general area of service.

Now if Quebec wants to do it that way, Mr. Speaker, what fundamental interest of the rest of Canada, or any individual province, is endangered by allowing her to do so? I can think of none; and indeed I hope that we in Ontario will not fail to lead English Canada in recognizing and accommodating this political, historical fact. In it lies progress, the hope of progress, toward a renewed Confederation.

Professor Brady recalls in his background paper that Jean Lesage once explained his idea of a special status by saying:

"It would be the result of an evolution during which Quebec would want to exert powers and responsibilities which the other provinces, for reasons of their own, might prefer to leave with the Federal Government."

Yet it is a sad fact that today, the present Federal Government is neither leading Canada toward recognition of Quebec's special status nor providing the dynamic policy initiative to which the provinces would respond with enthusiasm.

Ottawa's current policy, enunciated in its most thorough form by Justice Minister Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, is to extend the opting out option to any or all provinces who wish to exercise it. Though perhaps superficially plausible and politically more stable, this position will lead only to the erosion of Canada's capacity to implement a national consensus.

It does not recognize the particular status for Quebec, and because it does not, Ottawa's only means of coping with Quebec's determination is to effect adjustments and compromises within the legislative system which are then made available to all other provinces. This road will surely lead to an across-the-board diminution of Federal powers unless we in the English-speaking provinces provide the leadership which Ottawa has failed to come up with.

That leadership must devolve from a mutual recognition that it is not in our own interests, or in the interests of Canada as a whole, to carve out particular individual positions akin to that of Quebec. Indeed, it is in our interests, and Canada's jointly to decide and apply broad national policies in cooperation with the Federal Government.

In the absence of compelling initiatives from Ottawa, we in Ontario can play a creative role. We can enlist the support for the

kind of policy vis-a-vis Quebec I have outlined. It is a policy which will preserve and strengthen our federal system.

At the same time, Ontario will gain much from it. The economic and social progress which will be reflected across Canada as a whole will have a telling impact in our own province. The clarity with which Canada will be able to decide national objectives will greatly assist us in designing the future policies of Ontario; and our people will draw an immeasurable satisfaction from the knowledge that their country is forging into its second century secure in a stable set of relationships without which concrete progress is unlikely, if not impossible.

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would agree that we have reached a state in the Confederation debate when the limits of the powers which Quebec wishes to exercise must be clarified. Throughout English-speaking Canada there is a growing uneasiness that there are no limits, that for the defence of their traditions Quebec wants the right to exercise power in the socio-cultural field, and this is capable of so broad a definition that the federal powers will be inadequate to assure a basic unity for the country as a whole.

In his forceful way Eugene Forsey has warned of some of the problems in this connection. I would remind hon. members, as I quoted earlier, that Claude Ryan himself indicated that the kind of conference we are contemplating here this afternoon might discuss those limits that Quebec must present her views in specifics — or to use his phrase, that a “reasonable minimum” could be defined for the rest of Canada. There is reason to believe that an atmosphere is developing in which the question of these limits can be frankly raised and discussed in the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference.

There is another aspect of the basic division of powers between the Federal Government and the Provinces, which I would like to emphasize. Here, I would judge, if I interpreted the leader of the Opposition's comments correctly, that we do not completely see eye to eye.

Traditional thinking regarding the division of powers has tended to be simplistic that lines of demarcation between the provinces and Ottawa can be clearly drawn now, and the problem will be solved for our second century. I want to suggest that this is unrealistic now and it may become even more so as the years go by.

Experience has proven that there are very few powers which can

be effectively applied without, at least, consultation between the Federal Government and the Provinces — wherever that power may reside, according to the constitution. In spite of the disrepute into which the term has fallen, “cooperative federalism” is the answer to many of our difficulties.

I use that term in its real meaning, instead of some of the overtones that have been associated with it, and to it, in the last two or three years. For example, the power over monetary and fiscal policy must rest with the Federal Government. But surely it is obvious that the exercise of that power increasingly requires prior consultation with the provinces because of the impact it has in areas which fall wholly within provincial jurisdiction.

Conversely, on this currently controversial issue, the provinces have tended to become active in what would have been considered external affairs or foreign policy. What Quebec does with great trumpeting of principle, Ontario has often done quietly in the pragmatic pursuit of her provincial interests.

I look forward with interest to the Prime Minister’s answer to the question of the leader of the Opposition as to how many — and I choose my words carefully — agreements rather than treaties, the province of Ontario has entered into with foreign governments. Indeed, I would be interested to know to what extent there had been prior consultation with Ottawa in some instances — in the field of hydro, and trade, immigration and so on. Once again, Mr. Speaker, surely the difficulties here are reduced, and conceivably eliminated, not by the provinces doing any less in promoting their own interests, but simply by their conceding that external affairs naturally fall to the Federal Government which can speak on behalf of all Canada, and that therefore, prior consultation is advisable and will in the vast majority of cases preserve protocol. I think this issue is not as serious as it is presented at the present time. Indeed, the full story of agreement by Ontario, as compared with Quebec, might indicate a remarkable similarity. Let me quote again from Professor Brady:

“Today there is clearly a genuine difference of outlook between Quebec and other provinces on the question of altering the constitution. The upsurge of French Canadian nationalism has led to a hungering for a new status in Quebec that has no counterpart in other provinces.”

Professor Brady added:

“Quebec leaders, however, may become convinced that this

appetite for constitutional change may be satisfied by agreements and understandings between the Federal and Provincial Governments on matters of economic and social development. Federalism today, after all, rests not merely on a distribution of legislative powers but on agreements reached through consultation on how powers are to be employed. This means a remarkably flexible federal constitution, subject to change according to circumstances, and that is precisely what Canada at present enjoys. The constitution imposes no serious handicap on the 11 governments exploring together fresh policies of vital concern to all and necessary to ensure the economic and social progress of Canada. It also imposes no handicap on the various governments recognizing more clearly than ever in the past the fact of two cultures and two languages."

In my view, Mr. Speaker, that is sound advice. If we can arrive at a restatement of a division of powers that more accurately reflects the conditions of 1967, and our hope for the future, let us do so.

The BNA Act is not only the statute of an external Parliament, but it is, in good part, an obsolete document. Some 50 of its sections could be eliminated because they had reference to circumstances involved in the Confederation of 1867, and are no longer meaningful. Even the heart of the document, the distribution of legislative powers in sections 91 and 92, has been re-shaped out of recognition by changed conditions and concepts of government responsibility in society which have changed down through the years.

Most important of all, of course, is the growing dissatisfaction with the constitution, notably in the Province of Quebec. A few weeks ago, Claude Ryan, editor of *Le Devoir*, said that Quebec was not eager to secede from Canada, but desired expression, in the constitution, of a clearer and more satisfactory status.

Again, my hope would be that the informal atmosphere of the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference might be able to clarify differences and ease tensions, so that Ottawa could follow through in more formal decision-making conferences at a later stage. But without detracting from the importance of achieving a modern constitution, it should be remembered that if the task proves more difficult than anticipated, and delay becomes necessary, and if the series of conferences that the Prime Minister envisages becomes a longer one, all is not lost.

We have lived for 100 years by a process of agreement and consultation that has provided a remarkable degree of flexibility. Above everything else, that flexibility must be maintained if the Canadian Confederation is going to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I just want to say a word with regard to the amendment which has been put before us. Let me read the amendment again:

That this House regrets that such an important conference is proposed without recognizing the unique position of the Government of Canada, which has a predominant responsibility for strengthening Canadian unity and shaping the course of Confederation.

Now quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that is so confusing and confused that I find it a little bit difficult to know where to dive in.

"That the conference is proposed without recognizing the unique position of the Government of Canada —"

I do not know where there has been a failure to recognize the unique position of the Government of Canada.

Perhaps while I am making comments for the edification of all, including the Liberals, they will not interject.

The unique position of Canada is not being ignored. It is not a decision-making conference. It is a family gathering. Must a family conference always be called by the parents in the home of the parents?

It may be a good place to have it, but sometimes it may be good to go out into one of the homes of the members of the family.

The leader of the Opposition said there are many people, and he said this in reference to the Prime Minister, who have a feeling, however justified, that the conference is called in violation of normal prerogatives. Well quite frankly, I do not think the feeling is justified, and therefore why does one have to bow to it? It seems to me that once again the Liberal Party has found itself incapable of being anything other than the errand boy for the Federal Liberals, and the echo for Ottawa.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. leader of the Opposition thinks that the conference called between luncheon and tea with the Queen early in July is a first step, I do not see why he would not agree to that proposition that the next step would be a Fall Confederation of Tomorrow Conference, particularly if I can persuade the Prime Minister that it should be at least a four-day conference

rather than two days — the first two days to deal with his agenda, the final days to accommodate items which the other provinces might like to suggest.

In short, Mr. Speaker, I think the amendment is as irrelevant as so much else the Liberal Party seems to offer in coming to grips with the problems of Confederation, and we certainly shall not support it. But we certainly will support the main motion, a resolution calling for support of the Confederation of Tomorrow Conference to be hosted by Ontario.

**Confederation of Tomorrow
Cover Theme**

Each of the Canadian provinces and territories is represented by a coloured strand.

The Confederation of Tomorrow Conference will provide a forum for views and opinions on the future of Canada — hence the drawing together of the coloured strands in the same direction.